

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9953
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USEC BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3156

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PINT, SP
SUBJECT: VIEWS OF SILVA MUNOZ

REF: (A) 1540 (B) 76 MADRID 8215

1. FEDERICO SILVA MUNOZ, ALIANZA POPULAR (AP) LEADER AND
FORMER PUBLICSWORKS MINISTER, PROVIDED A TYPICALLY SOBER
APPRAISAL OF THE POLITICAL SCENE WHEN HE CAME, AT HIS
REQUEST, TO SEE THE AMBASSADOR AT THE RESIDENCE APRIL 21.
HE WAS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED THAT THE ELECTED "CORTES"
(PARLIAMENT), WHICH HE BELIEVED WOULD TAKE OFFICE JULY 1
OR 2 WITH A NEW GOVT BEING FORMED JULY 10-15 REFLECTING
ITS COMPOSITION, WOULD BE SO FRAGMENTED THAT THE MILITARY
WOULD BE TEMPTED TO INTERVENE TO SET THINGS RIGHT. IN
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CONTRAST TO THE UPBEAT VIEWS OF PSOE SEC GEN GONZALEZ
(SEPT), SILVA ALSO WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE
PROSPECTS FOR ANY CONSTRUCTIVE RELATIONSHIP IN THE
NEW CORTES BETWEEN THE MADRID-BASED PARTIES AND THE
REGIONAL GROUPINGS--PARTICULARLY BASQUE AND CATALAN--
AND WAS UNEASY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY MIGHT
HOLD THE "BALANCE OF POWER."

2. THE GOVT, SILVA OBSERVED, HAD PURSUED A POLICY OF GIVING IN TO THE LEFT WITHOUT DEMANDING ANYTHING IN RETURN ("ENTREGUISMO"), MENTIONING SPECIFICALLY THE AMNESTY AND PCE LEGALIZATION WITHOUT SPECIFYING WHAT THE GOVT SHOULD HAVE DEMANDED IN EXCHANGE. HE SAID JUSTICE MINISTER LAVILLA TOLD HIM RECENTLY (BUT PRIOR TO PCE LEGALIZATION) THAT THESE MEASURES WERE TAKEN TO ENSURE THE INTERNATIONAL CREDIBILITY OF THE ELECTIONS BY MAKING THEM LEGITIMATE TO THOSE DOMESTIC PARTIES WITH INTERNATIONAL LINKS (READ PSOE AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC "TEAM"). SILVA BELIEVED, HOWEVER, THAT ONCE THE GOVT HAD "NOTHING LEFT TO GIVE, THE LEFT WOULD CEASE COOPERATING."

3. SOME TIME AGO, SILVA CONTINUED, AP HAD CONVEYED TO SUAREZ ITS INTENTION UNCONDITIONALLY (I.E., WITHOUT EVEN DEMANDING ANY MINISTERIAL PORTFOLIOS) TO SUPPORT HIS CONTINUATION IN OFFICE AFTER ELECTIONS. BUT WITH THE EVOLVING POSSIBILITY OF A SUAREZ CANDIDACY AND THE LEGALIZATION OF THE PCE, AP HAS ADVISED SUAREZ THAT IT NOW WOULD CONDITION POST-ELECTION SUPPORT FOR HIM ON A PRE-ELECTION COALITION BETWEEN AP AND CENTRO DEMOCRATICO, BUT AGAIN WITHOUT DEMANDING ANY PORTFOLIOS FOR ITSELF. SUAREZ HAD NOT REPLIED, HOWEVER, AND SILVA OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERED SUCH A COALITION A REMOTE POSSIBILITY. HE VIEWED PARTIDO POPULAR (PP) TO BE THE ONLY CENTER GROUPING THAT MIGHT SUPPORT IT (THERE HAD BEEN TALKS, HE SAID, WITH PP PRESIDENT CABANILLAS) BUT ALL

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THE OTHER CENTER PARTIES WOULD BE OPPOSED AND, IN ANY CASE, EVENTS WERE MOVING AWAY FROM ANY SUCH COALITION. SKIPPING TO THE CENTER-LEFT, SILVA INDICATED THERE WAS AN "UNDER THE TABLE UNDERSTANDING" (UNSPECIFIED) BETWEEN AP AND THE "UNION ELECTORAL DE CENTRO-IZQUIERDA" HEADED BY LASUEN (FSD), MURILLO (PSOE-H), AND GARCIA LOPEZ (PSDE).

4. SILVA WAS PREDICTABLY BEARISH ON THE LONG-TERM POSSIBILITIES OF THE CENTER ("THE CENTER IS A FINE IDEA, BUT IT DOES NOT EXIST; YOU SHOULD NOT EXPECT MODERATION OF AN IMMEDIATE PEOPLE") AND VIEWED CENTRO DEMOCRATICO'S EFFORTS THUS FAR TO HAVE BEEN LARGELY A FAILURE. HOWEVER, HE CONCEDED THAT THE CENTER, WRIT LARGE, COULD WIN 30-40PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE JUNE CONTEST. THE AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT ALTHOUGH WE SUPPORTED NO PARTY OF ANY SORT, WE COULD UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR A CENTER FORMATION. SILVA PREDICTED AP WOULD WIN 25-30 PERCENT AND ABOUT 100 LOWER HOUSE SEATS (OUT OF 350). HE SAW THE FAR-RIGHT

WINNING 5 PERCENT, THE COMMUNISTS PERHPAS 10 PERCENT, AND THE SOCIALISTS 15-20 PERCENT. IF THE CENTER-RIGHT (MEANING THE MORE PROGRESSIVE ELEMENTS OF AP AND THE CENTRO DEMOCRATICO) CAME OUT WITH A STRONG MAJORITY, HE SAID, AP COULD UNDERGO A "RESTRUCTURING" (IMPLYING THE JETTISONING OF ITS MORE RIGHTIST ELEMENTS) LEADING TO THE FORMATION OF A CENTER-RIGHT PARLIAMENTARY COALITION.

5. TURNING TO AP, SILVA SAID ITS CONSTITUENCY RESPONDED MOST ENTHUSIASTICALLY TO THREE APPEALS: THE MEMORY OF FRANCO, ANTO-COMMUNISM, AND NATIONAL UNITY. THE MORE ACTIVE AND VISIBLE THE COMMUNISTS BECAME, THE MORE HARD-LINE WOULD AP'S CONSTITUENCY TEND TO BECOME. AT THE SAME TIME, THE IMPENDING FORMATION OF A "NATIONAL FRONT" OF FAR-RIGHT GROUPS LED BY LBAS PINAR (FUERZA NUEVA), GIRON (VETERNAS CONFDERATION) AND FERNANDEZ CUESTA (FALANGE ESPANOLA), ALTHOUGH IT WOULD TAKE SOME VOTES

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FROM AP, ALSO WOULD PUSH IT TOWARD THE CENTER. ON A MORE PERSONAL NOTE SILVA, WHO RESIGNED LAST WEEK AS PRESIDENT OF THE CAMPSA STATE PETROLEUM MONOPLY IN ORDER TO RUN IN THE ELECTIONS, SAID HE WOULD HEAD AP'S LIST FROM THE PROVINCE OF ZAMORA.

6. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH MANY OF SILVA'S CONCERNS ARE JUSTIFIABLE, HIS BLEAK PROGNOSIS DERIVES PRIMARILY FROM HIS OWN CONSERVATIVE FRAME OF REFERENCE. AP IS ATTEMPTING TO STRADDLE THE CENTER-RIGHT AND RIGHT, BUT SILVA'S READING OF AP'S CONSTITUENCY AND PARTY LEADERS' STRIDENTLY ANTI-GOVT RHETORIC IN THE WAKE OF PCE LEGALIZATION RAISE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT AP'S CAPACITY TO TRANSCEND ITS APPEAL TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT THEY "LIVED BETTER WITH FRANCO."

7. ABOVE APPROVED BY AMBASSADOR PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE.EATON

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